



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Stephen R. Pritchard
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

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CONTACT: Corbie Kump
(617) 626-1119

MA ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY PRITCHARD ANNOUNCES \$127,000
GRANT TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATION IN SANDWICH

Environmental Affairs Secretary Stephen Pritchard today announced that the state is providing \$127,000 in funds to the Thornton W. Burgess Society of Sandwich for improvements to the state Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's East Sandwich Game Farm property.

"The Thornton Burgess Society's environmental education and conservation programs provide a great public benefit and I am pleased to announce this grant, which will allow the Society to make significant improvements to the East Sandwich Game Farm property," Secretary Pritchard said. "The Society's salt marsh restoration efforts and infrastructure improvements will greatly enhance the natural environment of the property and the organization's environmental education capability."

"Preserving and improving the East Sandwich Game Farm is a gift to the Town of Sandwich and the entire Commonwealth. The Thornton W. Burgess Society is truly an asset to the Town of Sandwich and has done a tremendous job with the Game Farm. I am pleased that we were able to set aside additional funds for them to continue their work," said Senator Therese Murray (D-Plymouth), the Senate's budget chief who was instrumental in securing the funding in the 2002 Open Space Bond Act. "Thanks to the grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Thornton W. Burgess Society can make improvements to the Game Farm that will restore habitat and provide better access and educational opportunities for the public."

"I am thrilled that the Governor agreed with my request to release the \$127,000 for the Thornton Burgess Society projects," said state Representative Jeffrey Perry (R-Sandwich). "The natural history programs offered and the various programs provide a wide variety of fun and adventurous activities in the natural world for children and adults. My favorite activity is the nature walks. I am pleased that, because of this State funding, the property will be improved so that even more residents and visitors can be served."

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The Thornton Burgess Society will utilize the \$127,000 in state open space bond funds for a number of projects on the property. About \$25,000 will be used in addition to more than \$78,000 previously raised by the Society to remove a dam and culvert that will eventually help restore a nine-acre salt marsh. About \$80,000 will be used to significantly rehabilitate a building on the property with new public bathrooms and space for classes and seasonal exhibits. The remaining funds will be used to install a new septic system, new well, and for access road repairs.

The 133-acre East Sandwich Game Farm is owned by the state Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (DFW) and consists of a mix of wetland, shrub land, open field and forest. The DFW raised pheasant and quail on the property that were used to stock other areas for sport hunting until 1987. The Thornton W. Burgess Society and DFW have managed the property under a cooperative management agreement since 1996. Since then, the Society has utilized grants, private donations, and volunteer efforts to help clean up and improve the environment on the property. Under the cooperative management agreement, the property is to be managed as a wildlife sanctuary, while allowing the Thornton W. Burgess Society to have environmental education programming on the premises.

“We are very excited about the opportunities that the open space bond money will provide for enhancing the East Sandwich Game Farm property,” said Jeanne Johnson, Executive Director of the Thornton W. Burgess Society. “Funds will be used for building renovation, road improvements, and habitat restoration. This will allow us to utilize the property more for our environmental education programs for area school children and the general public.”

The Thornton W. Burgess Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1976 to inspire reverence for wildlife and concern for the natural environment. The organization is named after Sandwich, Massachusetts native Thornton W. Burgess, an author of over 170 children’s books and 15,000 syndicated newspaper stories who achieved national and international recognition for his children’s stories that teach lessons of conservation and love of wildlife.

The Division of Fisheries & Wildlife is responsible for the protection, restoration, and management of all native fish, wildlife, and habitat in Massachusetts. The agency owns and manages more than 120,000 acres of conservation land in Massachusetts, an extraordinarily diverse system of wildlife management areas and sanctuaries designed to forever ensure the survival, health and viability of all native wildlife communities.

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